

Topic Sentences and Transitional Sentences

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- **Topic sentences** are generally the first sentence of every paragraph in the body of the paper. While the thesis sentence tells the main idea of the overall paper, the topic sentence alerts the reader of the main idea of that particular paragraph. Always remember, the topic sentence needs to relate to the thesis statement.
- For example, if the **thesis statement** reads, “Odysseus is a hero because he is clever, strategic, and unselfish,” the **first topic sentence** needs to reflect the thesis statement’s first main point: “Odysseus is a hero because he is clever.” The body of that paragraph would thus focus only on the quality of his being clever.
- When discussion of this quality of cleverness is complete, a **transitional sentence** (the last sentence of the paragraph) draws a conclusion and sets the stage for the paragraph that follows. **Transitional sentences** weave together the main idea from the current paragraph that is about to end to the main idea of the upcoming paragraph.
- One common method to link ideas is to use key words and/or similar phrases that connect. Here is an example **transitional sentence**: “Odysseus’s cleverness shows he is able to outwit his enemies and thus shows his strategic powers.”
- This sentence would come at the end of a paragraph about Odysseus’s cleverness. The paragraph that follows it would be about his strategic powers. Note that the first topic in the thesis is that Odysseus is clever and that the second topic is that he is strategic.
- Continue the use of writing strong topic sentences and subsequent transitional sentences in the same pattern so that all of the thesis statement’s main ideas are discussed.
- If the topic sentences reflect directly back to the main idea of the thesis statement, the entire essay would form a solid foundation of sub-ideas that link onto each other.